



Community Development Department
675 Wildwood Avenue
Rio Dell, CA 95562
(707) 764-3532

For the Meeting of October 21, 2025

☐ Consent Item; ☒ Discussion Item

To: City Council

From: Kevin Caldwell, Community Development Director

Through: Kyle Knopp, City Manager

Date: October 17, 2025

Subject: Billboards

Recommendation:

That the City Council:

1. Receive a brief staff report regarding billboard past discussions and the process for establishing billboards; and
2. Open the public hearing, receive public input, close the public hearing and deliberate; and
3. Provide direction to staff.

Discussion

At the Council meeting of October 7, 2025 Wally Coppini, representing the Chamber of Commerce, addressed the Council asking that the Council agendaize a discussion on billboards, in particular billboards promoting the City and its businesses.

In 2022 the Council discussed three possible sites for billboards over at the City wastewater disposal field. The primary intent was to generate revenue and promote the City's image and community events. Council directed staff to prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP's) for up to three signs which would be constructed, operated and maintained by a third party. Staff prepared the RFP and solicited proposals. No proposals were received. A copy of the RFP is included as **Attachment 1**.

The City's current sign regulations limits billboards (Freeway Oriented Signs) to the Humboldt-Rio Dell Business Park (HRDBP). The City does own a small parcel just south of the southerly entrance. See Figure 1.



Figure 1

Of course, in order to promote the City and its events and businesses, it makes more sense to allow allowing billboards/signs across the freeway on the City's Wastewater Disposal parcel. In order to do so, we would need to amend the sign regulations and rezone the areas for the signs to Industrial Commercial (IC). It should be noted that the City's current sign regulations require that sign be a half-mile apart. Caltrans regulates all billboards within 660 feet from a State Highway and requires that the location be zoned either commercial or industrial. Figure 2 identifies possible locations. The middle location is near an existing power pole, an electrical source for a potential digital LED sign.



Figure 2

The process for permitting a commercial billboard with Caltrans involves navigating the California Outdoor Advertising Act (OAA). Here is a summary of the key requirements and steps:

1. Caltrans Jurisdiction and Permit Requirements

- **License First:** The individual or company must first acquire an **Outdoor Advertising License** from Caltrans.
- **Permit Required:** An **Outdoor Advertising Display Permit** is required from Caltrans' Office of Outdoor Advertising (ODA) for off-premises commercial advertising displays that are:
 - Within **660 feet** from the edge of the State highway right-of-way.
 - Viewed primarily by persons traveling on the main-traveled way of the highway (Highway 101 is a primary highway).
- **Location Restrictions:** The proposed location must meet several strict criteria:
 - Must be **outside the right-of-way** of the highway.
 - Location must be zoned **industrial or commercial** by the local government (City of Rio Dell or Humboldt County).
 - Must **not be adjacent to a classified landscaped freeway** (off-premise displays are generally prohibited on landscaped freeways).
 - There must be an existing **business activity within 1,000 feet** of the proposed display location on either side of the highway.
- **Spacing Requirements (for primary highways not in an incorporated city):**
 - Must be **300 feet** from any other permitted display on the same side of the highway in an unincorporated area. (If within the city limits of Rio Dell, the distance is **100 feet**).
- **Application and Documents:** The application requires submission of:

- A completed **Outdoor Advertising Display Permit Application**.
- Applicable fees.

Options

1. The Council could direct staff to update RFP and solicit proposals.
2. The Council could direct staff to update RFP and solicit proposals and amend the zoning regulations to rezone three small portions of the City's wastewater disposal site to Industrial Commercial and amend the sign regulations to allow signs in this area.

Attachment 1: January 2022 RFP

Attachment 2: Existing Sign Locations

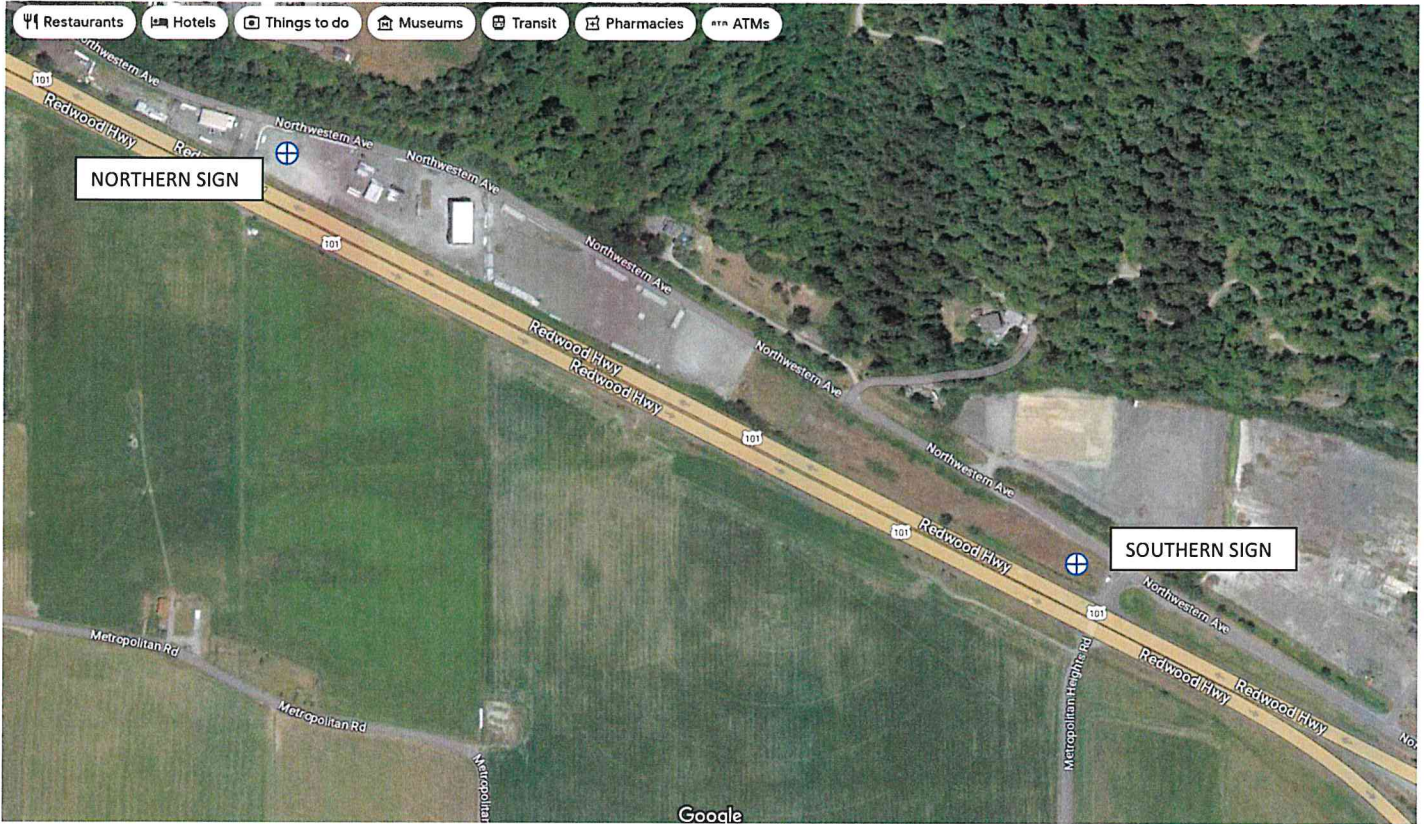
Attachment 3: Sign Examples Wastewater Disposal Site



Southern Billboard



Northern Billboard



675 Wildwood Avenue
Rio Dell, CA 95562
(707) 764-3532
(707) 764-5480 (fax)



DATE: January 4, 2022

TO: Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Travis Sanborn, Management Analyst

THROUGH: Kyle Knopp, City Manager

SUBJECT: Approve the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the use of City-owned real property to develop, construct, operate, and maintain digital or non-digital message board sign(s)/billboards

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL:

Approve the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the use of City-owned real property to develop, construct, operate, and maintain digital or non-digital message board sign(s)/billboards.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

As part of the City's plan to attain fiscal sustainability, the City is exploring allowing a private firm to develop, construct, operate and maintain digital or non-digital outdoor advertising message board sign(s)/billboards on City-owned property as a method to generate revenue. Moreover, updating the City's signage/billboards will help to modernize the City's image, promote the City's community events, add value to the City's owned real property, and stimulate economic investment by attracting and supporting the local business community.

The primary objective of the RFP is to seek proposals from qualified individuals, companies and/or entities to develop, construct, operate and maintain up to three Signs on City-owned real property located along state highways.

ATTACHMENTS

Request for Proposals for the use of City-owned real property to develop, construct, operate, and maintain digital or non-digital message board sign(s)/billboards



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) FOR THE
USE OF CITY-OWNED REAL PROPERTY TO
DEVELOP, CONSTRUCT, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN DIGITAL OR NON-DIGITAL
MESSAGE BOARD SIGN(S)/BILLBOARDS**

Issued: (Month, Day, 2022)

Proposals Due: (Month, Day, 2022)



**City of Rio Dell
675 Wildwood Avenue
Rio Dell, CA 95562**

1. Introduction

As part of the City's plan to attain fiscal sustainability, the City is exploring allowing a private firm to develop, construct, operate and maintain digital or non-digital outdoor advertising message board sign(s)/billboards (Signs) on City-owned property as a method to generate revenue. Moreover, updating the City's signage/billboards will help to modernize the City's image, promote the City's community events, add value to the City's owned real property, and stimulate economic investment by attracting and supporting the local business community.

2. Scope of Work/Understanding

The City of Rio Dell seeks proposals from qualified individuals, companies and/or entities(firms) to:

- Develop, construct, operate and maintain up to three Signs on City-owned real property located along state highways; with one sign operating for the benefit of the city and the remaining sign(s) to be leased. If only one digital sign is proposed, the City would need to be allotted a set amount of time and content while the remaining time and content would be leased out.
- The proposals submitted in response to this RFP must conform to the terms, conditions and specifications described hereafter.
- After receipt of responses to the RFP, review thereof, and selection of a firm(s) as the owner/operator of the Signs, the City will negotiate and prepare an agreement with the proposed operator(s) for the development, construction, operation and maintenance of the Sign(s) on City property. Thereafter, the agreement will be presented to the Rio Dell City Council for final approval.

Furthermore, the RFP is put forth with the following understanding:

- The proposal by a firm needs to clearly identify the City site or City sites desired, number of Signs, type and design criteria of each sign (or signs) that will be developed, constructed, operated and maintained by the firm.
- The development, construction, operation and maintenance of the Sign(s) proposed by the firm must identify requirements related to and in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as a condition to the approval of the agreement, which shall be at the sole cost and expense of the firm. In addition, the development, construction, operation and maintenance of the sign(s) must comply with all other applicable regulatory approvals (e.g. California Department of Transportation), which shall also be at the sole cost and expense of the firm.
- The development, construction, operation and maintenance of the Sign(s) need to provide direct revenue to the City and promote City sponsored events, support the local business community, disseminate public safety, and traffic message (e.g. Amber Alerts) at no cost to the City.

- Title 17 of the Rio Dell Municipal Code regulates signage in the City (see Chapter 17.30.310- Signs and nameplates). Updates to Title 17 may be required based on City Council direction and policy. If needed, the updates will be completed by City staff. The update process will entail both Planning Commission recommendation and City Council approval and will take approximately 3-6 months. This estimated timeframe should be considered and included in the overall project schedule.
- The selected firm should have significant experience and a verifiable track record of accomplishment. Innovative proposals that maximize the return to the City are encouraged.
- All City-owned qualifying property shall be offered in “as is” and “where is” condition, and the City does not make any representations and/or warranties as to the suitability of any City-owned property for any proposed sign. Each firm is encouraged to perform its own feasibility analysis of any particular City site and the requisite regulatory approvals associated therewith for the use of said City site for a sign(s).

3. Proposal Requirements

The City welcomes responses to the RFP in a format that the firm believes best expresses its qualifications. Lengthy responses are not expected. Short, concise, yet comprehensive proposals are preferred.

All submittals should include the following:

- Relevant Experience: A description of at least three similar projects completed by the individuals, companies, and/or teams that comprise the firm, which clearly demonstrates the requisite expertise in the development, construction and operation of Sign(s). Relevant similar projects should distinguish between the projects of the individuals, companies, and/or teams that comprise the firm, if applicable. Relevant experience should also include:
 - Being a direct party to a similar contractual obligation with the public sector and/or governmental entity for a similar project.
 - Preparation of applications and related documents pertaining to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) or other similar or comparable environmental review process for a similar project.
 - A similar project as a lessee or party to a long-term ground lease or similar real property right or interest with a public sector and/or governmental agency.
 - Experience with California cities and California Department of Transportation should be highlighted.
- Description of the Project Team: Detailed information on the proposed work team and their specific role, including membership of the board of directors, senior management,

corporate history, corporate mission statement, and corporate organizational structure. Similar information is requested for any business partner that will be involved with the project and their specific role.

- References: Provide complete contact information for at least five clients or partners with whom the firm has successfully completed similar projects for.

- Proposed Sign(s) Site(s): Using the potential areas for siting a sign(s), identify the site(s) that your company would propose. For reference, below is a list of City-owned Real Property:



Attachment 1- Potential Sites (●) for Sign(s) on City-owned real property



Attachment 2- Potential Sites (●) for Sign(s) on City-owned real property

| Site | Address | Zoning | Use | Responsible Department | Potential for Declassification | APN |
|------|-------------|--------|--------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Highway 101 | PF | Vacant | Public Works / Waste Water | Low | 205-111-039-000 |

If the proposed site is within Caltrans' designated landscaped areas, explain your experience in obtaining approval to install Signs in those areas. Also include a detailed description of the Sign(s) that will be developed, constructed and operated on each particular City site, as applicable. The detailed information should describe specifications of the Sign(s) (e.g. remote diagnostic capabilities, Amber Alert capabilities, automatic brightness adjustments, UL and IEC criteria, color calibration, and remote shutdown capabilities) and compliance with the applicable federal, state, and local other regulatory laws and ordinances.

• Construction and Maintenance Requirements: Provide a detailed description of the construction of the digital sign (including but not limited to the preparation of the City site, the installation of infrastructure and utilities, and the installation of the Signs) and compliance with all applicable federal, state and local building codes. In addition, a detailed description of the

regularly schedule onsite maintenance, internal services access for safety and improved appearance, and proposed upgrades to the digital sign during the term of an agreement will also need to be provided.

• Timeline - Development and Construction Schedule: An overall proposed development and construction schedule including the anticipated time periods needed to negotiate the agreement, approval period for any further entitlements to execute the development; preparation of environmental documents, period of time to obtain financing (if any), construction of the Sign(s), and any other conditions in order to complete the development and construction of the Sign(s).

• Agreement Terms and Conditions: The proposed business terms of an agreement including but not limited to:

- The length of the term together with any options (if any);
- The proposed lease terms and compensation to the City (e.g. upfront payments, annual payments, type of payment (percentage of gross revenue, including any definitions, other considerations);
- Permitted and prohibited material to be advertised;
- Type of advertising desired;
- Criteria for promoting community events, local businesses, disseminating public safety and traffic related messages, and any percentage of advertising time that will be allocated to the City;
- And compliance with all applicable federal, state and local building codes; and
- Additionally, a detailed description of the regularly scheduled onsite maintenance, internal service access for safety and improved.

• Project Proforma: A project development cost spreadsheet, which shall include specific line items costs (such as soft costs, hard costs, financing costs, contingency costs, etc.) in sufficient detail, a schedule as to when said costs are anticipated to occur, the development assumptions together with the rationale associated therewith, and the anticipated or project payments to the City.

• Sign Regulations: Provide firm's experience in analyzing sign regulations and drafting local government regulations. Specifically, the City is interested in what recommendations the firm will propose in order to allow a digital or non-digital message board(s) or Signs to be constructed on the City's real property.

• Indemnity: The firm will be required to defend, indemnify and hold the City harmless from and against any claims arising from the selection of the proposed operator(s), any amendment to the City sign ordinance, and/or approval of an agreement between the City and firm.

• Litigation History: Please include a description of any litigation within the past five years involving any individuals, companies, and/or teams that comprise the firm, which is in any way associated with the development, construction or operation of digital sign(s). If applicable,

please provide any information related to said litigation, including case name and number, the venue of the case, and the outcome.

4. Instructions and Schedule for Submittal of Proposals

The City shall not be liable for any expenses incurred by any proposer in relation to the preparation or submittal of Proposals. Expenses include, but are not limited to, expenses by proposer in preparing a Proposal or related information in response to this RFP; negotiations with City on any matter related to this RFP; and costs associated with interviews, meetings, travel or presentations. Additionally, City shall not be liable for expenses incurred as a result of City's rejection of any Proposals made in response to this RFP.

Proposals are due before 5:00 PM on (Month, Day, 2022). This time and date is fixed and extensions may not be granted. The City does not recognize the U. S. Postal Service, its postmarks or any other organization as its agent for purposes of dating the Proposal. All Proposals received after the deadline shown will be rejected, returned to sender and will not receive further consideration. Furthermore, the City reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals and to waive information and minor irregularities in any Proposal received.

Mail by (or hand-deliver) **three (3) hard copies** and **one (1) electronic proposal file** of the proposal to:

City of Rio Dell

City Manager Department

Attn: Travis Sanborn

675 Wildwood Avenue

Rio Dell, CA 95562

5. RFP Inquiries

All requests for clarifications, changes, exceptions, deviations to the terms and conditions set forth in this RFP should be submitted in writing to: Travis Sanborn, Project Coordinator: sanbornt@cityofriodell.ca.gov.

The final day for the receipt of questions shall be before 5:00 PM on Month Day, 2022 and will be answered and posted to <https://cityofriodell.ca.gov/> (insert appropriate link) by 5:00 PM on Month Day, 2022.

To ensure fairness and avoid misunderstandings, all communications must be in written format and addressed only to the individual set forth above. Any verbal communications will not be considered or responded to. Written communications should be submitted via email to the address provided above. All questions received by the due date will be logged and reviewed and, if required, a response will be provided via an addendum to the RFP. **Any communications, whether written or verbal, with the Mayor, any City Councilmember, or City staff, other than the individual indicated above (specific to this Request for Proposals), prior to award of a contract, is strictly prohibited and the proposer shall be disqualified from consideration.**

6. Public Records

All Proposals submitted in response to this RFP become the property of the City and under the Public Records Act (Government Code § 6250 et. seq.) are public records, and as such may be subject to public review at least ten (10) days before selection and award.

If a proposer claims a privilege against public disclosure for trade secret or other proprietary information, such information must be clearly identified in the Proposal. Personal information should be labeled as confidential and will remain so. Note that under California law, price proposal to a public agency is not a trade secret.

7. Evaluation Process and Selection Criteria

The City will conduct the selection process. The City is the final decision-maker regarding this selection, and it reserves the right to reject any or all responses at any time. The City reserves the right to request clarification or additional information from individual respondents and to request some or all respondents to make presentations to City staff, community groups, or others.

Selection Criteria: The following criteria will be used for initial scoring purposes and to determine a proposer interview list (please note, the City may choose to interview the top two responsive proposers – at a minimum).

1. Qualifications/Relevant Experience (20%)
2. Proposed Sign(s) Location(s) (20%)
3. Project Timeline/Schedule (20%)
4. Agreement Terms and Conditions (30%)
5. Project Proforma (10%)

After proposer interviews, the City will re-score the interviewee's proposal using the aforementioned scoring criteria. The subsequent re-scoring of all interviewee's proposals shall be the basis for the selection of a proposer and a recommendation to the City Council for final approval.



